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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [ID](#)
SUBJECT: INSIDE AN INDONESIAN PRISON WITH
FRETELIN LEADER XANANA GUSMAO

REF: JAKARTA 4875

[11](#). CLASSIFIED BY POLCOUNS EDMUND MCWILLIAMS, REASON,
1.5 (B) AND (D).

[12](#). (C) SUMMARY: A WESTERN DIPLOMAT WAS ABLE TO ENTER
CIPINANG PRISON, CLAIMING TO BE A RELATIVE OF A
PRISONER, AND MET BRIEFLY WITH A NUMBER OF PROMINENT
DISSIDENTS AND OTHER PRISONERS. THE DIPLOMAT NOTED THAT
THE PRISONERS APPEAR TO BE USING THEIR TIME TOGETHER TO
SHARE POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES, NOT UNLIKE THE POLITICAL
CROSS-POLLINATION THAT TOOK PLACE IN SOME OF THE LESS
HARSH CAMPS IN THE SOVIET GULAG OR IN SOUTH AFRICA'S
ROBBEN ISLAND. FRETELIN LEADER XANANA GUSMAO, A LEADING
FIGURE WITHIN THE PRISONER COMMUNITY, TOLD THE DIPLOMAT
THAT HIS VISION OF A FUTURE FOR EAST TIMOR INVOLVED A
PERIOD OF AUTONOMY FOLLOWED BY A VOTE BY EAST TIMORESE
ABOUT THEIR FUTURE. END SUMMARY

[13](#). (C) A WESTERN DIPLOMAT, POSING AS A RELATIVE OF A
PRISONER IN JAKARTA'S CIPINANG PRISON, USED THE OCCASION
OF NATIONAL DAY VISITS AUGUST 17 TO ENTER THE PRISON.
THE DIPLOMAT SOUGHT A MEETING WITH "WILSON," ONE OF THE
POLITICAL PRISONERS FROM THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY
(PRD) WHO WAS RECENTLY CONVICTED AND SENTENCED ON
DISSENT CHARGES. WITH MEETINGS BETWEEN PRISONERS AND
THEIR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS TAKING PLACE IN A RELAXED
ATMOSPHERE WITHIN A COURTYARD IN THE PRISON, THE
DIPLOMAT WAS ABLE TO MEET AND SPEAK BRIEFLY WITH XANANA
GUSMAO, IMPRISONED LEADER OF THE FRETELIN RESISTANCE
FORCES OF EAST TIMOR.

[14](#). (C) GUSMAO APPEARED IN GOOD HEALTH AND GOOD SPIRITS.
GUSMAO HAS EMERGED AS A LEADER AMONG MANY PROMINENT
POLITICAL DISSIDENTS WHO ARE INTERNED AT CIPINANG
PRISON. HE RECENTLY ORGANIZED A SOCCER MATCH BETWEEN A
TEAM OF POLITICAL DISSIDENTS AND COMMON CRIMINALS (THE
DISSIDENTS WON). ACCORDING TO ACCOUNTS GIVEN TO THE
DIPLOMAT, THE DISSIDENTS SPEAK JOKINGLY OF THE CIPINANG
"PARLIAMENT" OR "UNIVERSITY," ALLUDING TO THE BROAD
POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS WHICH TAKE PLACE AMONG THE
PRISONERS. THE DIPLOMAT NOTED THAT STUDENTS VISIT SOME
PRISONERS, SUCH AS IMPRISONED DISSIDENT SRI BINTANG
PAMUNGKAS, TO LISTEN TO HIS INFORMAL LECTURES.

[15](#). (C) GUSMAO, WHO IS LEARNING ENGLISH, AND OTHER
PRISONERS ARE ABLE TO RECEIVE BOOKS, PERIODICALS AND
NEWSPAPERS AND HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SMUGGLE OUT LETTERS AND
EVEN ARTICLES WITHOUT MUCH TROUBLE. THE PRISONERS
DEPEND HEAVILY ON FOOD SENT BY FRIENDS AND RELATIVES
INASMUCH AS PRISON FOOD IS SAID TO BE OF VERY POOR
QUALITY.

[16](#). (C) GUSMAO INDICATED TO THE DIPLOMAT THAT WHILE HE
WOULD WELCOME A CHANCE TO RETURN HOME TO EAST TIMOR, HE
IS OPPOSED TO THE NOTION THAT HE MIGHT BE RELEASED AND

GO INTO EXILE. GUSMAO REFUSED REQUESTS BY THE DIPLOMAT AND BY JOURNALISTS (ALSO PRESENT ON NATIONAL DAY) TO PROVIDE ANY READOUT ON HIS JULY 16 DINNER WITH NELSON MANDELA. HE ALSO CLAIMED TO HAVE LITTLE KNOWLEDGE OF THE UN SPONSORED EAST TIMOR DIALOGUE BETWEEN LISBON AND JAKARTA BUT EXPRESSED SOME HOPE FOR PROGRESS THROUGH THAT MECHANISM.

¶17. (C) GUSMAO DID SHARE HIS VIEWS WITH THE DIPLOMAT REGARDING A SOLUTION FOR EAST TIMOR. HE SAID THAT HE BELIEVED THE SHAPE OF A FINAL SOLUTION WOULD INVOLVE SOME FORM OF AUTONOMY FOR FOUR TO FIVE YEARS AND THEN A VOTE BY THE PEOPLE OF EAST TIMOR ON THEIR FUTURE.

¶18. (C) COMMENT: THE INTERACTION AMONG THE NON-CRIMINAL PRISONERS IS REMINISCENT OF ACCOUNTS OF LIFE IN SOME OF THE LESS HARSH PRISONS IN THE SOVIET GULAG OR ON ROBBER ISLAND IN SOUTH AFRICA WHERE PRESIDENT MANDELA SPENT MUCH OF HIS LIFE. AS IN CIPINANG THOSE CAMPS SAW A RICH CROSS POLLINATION OF POLITICAL IDEAS AND STRATEGIES AMONG PRISONERS. WE NOTE AS WELL, THAT SEVERAL OF THE PRISONERS EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT BEING MIXED WITH HARDENED CRIMINAL PRISONERS WHO OFTEN FUNCTIONED AS SPIES FOR THE PRISON ADMINISTRATION. TYPICALLY, ONE CRIMINAL IS PLACED WITH THREE POLITICAL PRISONERS IN FOUR-PERSON CELLS. XANANA REPORTEDLY HAS A PRIVATE CELL.

HARVEY